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EMPLOYMENT OF RESERVES IN THE OPERATIONAL DEFENSE(U)
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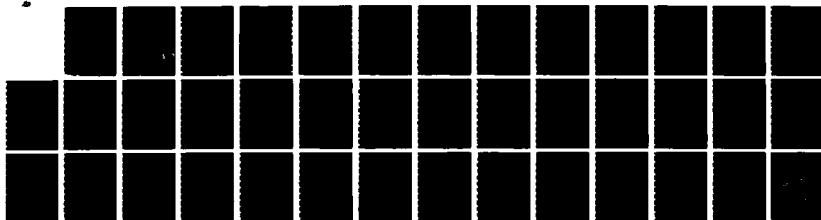
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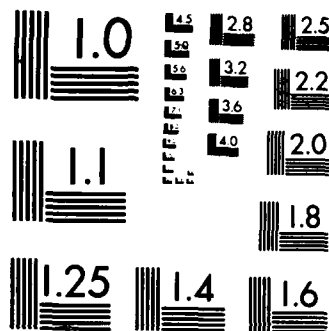
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Employment of Reserves in the
Operational Defense

by

Major Mark L. Hanna
Infantry

School of Advanced Military Studies
U.S. Army Command and General Staff College
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

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SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE

AD-A174252

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved
OMB No 0704-0188
Exp. Date Jun 30, 1986

1a. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION UNCLASSIFIED			1b. RESTRICTIVE MARKINGS		
2a. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION AUTHORITY			3. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY OF REPORT <i>Approved for public release, distribution is unlimited.</i>		
2b. DECLASSIFICATION/DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE			5. MONITORING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)		
4. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)			7a. NAME OF MONITORING ORGANIZATION		
6a. NAME OF PERFORMING ORGANIZATION <i>School of Advanced Military Studies, USA CGSC.</i>		6b. OFFICE SYMBOL (if applicable) <i>AT2L-SWV</i>	7b. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)		
6c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code) <i>Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027</i>			9. PROCUREMENT INSTRUMENT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER		
8a. NAME OF FUNDING / SPONSORING ORGANIZATION		8b. OFFICE SYMBOL (if applicable)	10. SOURCE OF FUNDING NUMBERS		
8c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)			PROGRAM ELEMENT NO.	PROJECT NO.	TASK NO.
			WORK UNIT ACCESSION NO.		
11. TITLE (Include Security Classification) <i>EMPLOYMENT OF RESERVES IN THE OPERATIONAL DEFENSE</i>					
12. PERSONAL AUTHOR(S) <i>Hanna, Mark L</i>					
13a. TYPE OF REPORT <i>Monograph</i>		13b. TIME COVERED FROM _____ TO _____		14. DATE OF REPORT (Year, Month, Day) <i>86 April 10</i>	
				15. PAGE COUNT <i>32</i>	
16. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTATION					
17. COSATI CODES			18. SUBJECT TERMS (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)		
FIELD	GROUP	SUB-GROUP	<i>Operational level, Operational Art, Reserves, Counterstroke, Defense</i>		
19. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number) <i>Attached</i>					
20. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY OF ABSTRACT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNCLASSIFIED/UNLIMITED <input type="checkbox"/> SAME AS RPT <input type="checkbox"/> DTIC USERS			21. ABSTRACT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION		
22a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL <i>MAJ Mark L Hanna</i>			22b. TELEPHONE (Include Area Code) <i>913-624-2132</i>		22c. OFFICE SYMBOL <i>AT2L-SWV</i>

ABSTRACT

Employment of Reserves in the Operational Defense, by Major Mark L. Hanna, USA, 32 pages.

This study is an analysis of how best to employ operational reserves to counter an enemy operational offensive and developing penetration. The study addresses the question of whether reserves should be employed as they become available to limit and then reduce the enemy penetration; or whether they should be marshaled and built up, allowing the penetration to continue, and then committed in a decisive counterstroke. Classical theory concerning defensive operational art and employment of reserves is analyzed, including works of Clausewitz, Jomini, and Sun Tzu. Historical analysis compares and contrasts employment of operational reserves by the Germans in the 1943 Kharkov campaign and the Allies in the 1944 Ardennes campaign. Finally, AirLand Battle doctrine is analyzed in light of conclusions drawn from the theoretical and historical analysis.

The study concludes that the optimum employment of operational reserves involves allowing the penetration to develop while marshaling and concentrating one's reserves for a decisive counterstroke against the flanks and rear of successive portions of the enemy forces. Theoretical and historical analysis supports this conclusion. Historical analysis also shows that many factors may be present to mitigate this theoretically correct employment. These include terrain, relative tactical ability, strategic goals, risk, command structure, and command style of the operational commander. The study further concludes that AirLand Battle doctrine for the operational defense is well in line with the theoretical and historical conclusions.

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Major Mark L. Hanna
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10 April 1986

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School of Advanced Military Studies
Monograph Approval

Name of Student: Mark L. Hanna, Infantry.

Title of Monograph: Employment of Reserves in the Operational Defense.

Approved by:

Richard M. Swain, LTC FA
(LTC Richard M. Swain, Ph. D.)

Monograph Director

Richard Hart Sinnreich
(COL Richard Hart Sinnreich, MA)

Director, School of
Advanced Military Studies

Philip J. Brooks
(Philip J. Brooks, Ph D.)

Director, Graduate Degree
Programs

Accepted this 22nd day of May 1986.

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SECTION I - INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to determine how best to employ operational reserves to counter an enemy operational offensive and developing penetration. Unless the enemy has seriously miscalculated, one or more developing penetrations will be the natural result of an operational offensive. For the purposes of this study, operational reserves are defined to be multi-divisional forces that are uncommitted at the time of the enemy offensive or made available by withdrawal from less threatened sectors. The creation as well as employment of these reserves will be addressed in the course of the paper.

The operational defense involves a dilemma concerning the employment of reserves to counter a developing enemy penetration. Should reserves be employed as they become available to limit and then reduce the "bulge" or should they be marshaled and built up, allowing the penetration to develop, and then committed in a concentrated counterstroke? Allowing a penetration to develop can involve considerable risk, while committing forces as they become available may be premature, piecemeal, and indecisive. This dilemma was faced by the German Army between the Donets and Dnieper rivers during the winter of 1943 and by the Allied Army in the Ardennes in December 1944. In both cases operational reserves were created from uncommitted forces and by economizing in less threatened sectors. In the Ardennes, the Allies committed these reserves as they became available to stop the

penetrating forces and then gradually reduce the "bulge." The Germans, on the other hand, allowed the Soviet penetration to continue while marshaling and concentrating their reserves for a decisive counterstroke. These campaigns illustrate two different methods for employing operational reserves to counter an enemy operational penetration.

This study should develop insight concerning how to counter an enemy penetration and what conditions and factors limit and govern the options for employment of operational reserves. The study should also contribute to understanding operational art by illustrating how it functions linking tactical activities to strategic objectives in the operational defense. The U.S. Army's biggest challenge is the defense of Western Europe against a large scale Warsaw Pact attack. The creation and employment of operational reserves will be crucial to such a defense.

The study is conducted in three parts. Part one is an analysis of classical theory concerning operational art in the defense. Where necessary, conditions of modern warfare are considered and applied to qualify conclusions from the classical analysis. This analysis concerns the nature and principles of the operational defense and establishes a framework for the historical analysis conducted in part two. Part two is an analysis of how defensive operational art was conducted in the 1943 Kharkov and 1944 Ardennes campaigns. Employment of operational reserves are compared and contrasted together with

the factors and conditions that governed employment considerations in the two campaigns. Part three is an analysis of current U.S. doctrine concerning defensive operational art in light of conclusions drawn from parts one and two.

SECTION II - THEORY OF THE OPERATIONAL DEFENSE

The definitions of tactics, strategy and operational art in FM 100-5, Operations, serve as a point of departure for studying the theory of the operational defense. According to FM 100-5, "military strategy is the art and science of employing the armed forces of a nation or alliance to secure policy objectives by the application or threat of force."¹ Strategy establishes goals in theaters of war and theaters of operations. "Tactics is the art by which corps and smaller units translate potential combat power into victorious battles and engagements."² Operational art occupies the ground between tactics and strategy, using tactical engagements and battles to accomplish strategic goals through the design, organization, and conduct of campaigns and major operations.³

These definitions are well grounded in classical theory and the lessons of military history applied to modern conditions. The writings of two theorists, Jomini and Clausewitz, provide more insight into the nature of the operational level of war.

The concept of operational art can be derived from Jomini's definitions of strategy and grand tactics. Strategy, according to Jomini, involves maneuvering armies to decisive points in the zone of operations. Grand tactics involves maneuvering the army on the battlefield, making dispositions and combinations, and bringing the forces into action. Once the forces are committed to action, tactics wins the battle. The goals that these battlefield victories are meant to serve are determined by a

higher level of war which Jomini called grand strategy.*

Clausewitz' theory on levels of war is oriented more on ends and means as opposed to Jomini's orientation on activities. Clausewitz identified two levels of war, tactics and strategy. His description of strategy includes the concept of operational art. According to Clausewitz, tactics concerned the use of armed forces to win the engagement and strategy the use of engagements to attain the object of the war. Where tactics includes the planning, organization and activities directed toward winning engagements between opposing armed forces, strategy involves coordinating and sequencing engagements to best accomplish the object of the war.†

Conditions of modern warfare have placed impetus on identifying the operational level of war distinct from tactics and strategy. The appearance of mass armies combined with the dispersal necessitated by the lethality of modern weapons has extended the width of the battlefield. Air forces and mechanization have extended its depth and increased its tempo. With tactical engagements occurring in number, intensity and frequency never imagined by Jomini or Clausewitz, it is crucial to identify and practice a distinct operational level of war to coordinate and sequence these engagements toward the strategic goals of the war or theater.

Modern conditions have also blurred the dividing line between tactics and operational art. The increased dispersal of forces and tempo of modern battle have forced a decentralization of tactical control and maneuver so that even commanders at

company and battalion level must sequence and coordinate tactical engagements to attain a higher objective. The fundamental principles and doctrinal concepts that guide the practice of operational art apply equally to modern tactics.

What is unique and distinct about operational art is that it is directly concerned with attaining the strategic goal of the war or theater. Or, to put it another way, operational art uses tactical engagements to produce the military condition which achieves the strategic goal. While commanders at a lower level coordinate and sequence engagements to accomplish a higher tactical objective, the operational level commander is directly concerned with creating the military condition that accomplishes the strategic goal.

The dominant characteristic of the theoretical defense is that it must include offensive action. Clausewitz describes this as the "shield of well-directed blows."⁶ He further describes the defense as being permeated with pronounced elements of the offensive and the counterattack as an essential feature of the defense in both tactics and strategy.⁷ Jomini places similar emphasis on the offensive character of a proper defense and includes the concept of offense within the defense in the province of grand tactics.⁸ Sun Tzu's concept of the defense includes using what he calls "the normal and extraordinary forces" to meet the attack. The normal force confronts the enemy while the extraordinary force attacks the flank to wrest the initiative.⁹ The dominant characteristic and thread of continuity in classical theory concerning the defense is its

offensive dimension.

It is the offensive dimension that allows the defender to exploit the advantages of the defense. Clausewitz described the defense as the stronger form of war at both the tactical and strategic (operational) levels. Clausewitz felt that the defense had a natural superiority in the means to achieve tactical or strategic success. These include surprise, benefit of terrain, and concentric attack.¹⁰ The superiority of the defense in these means is derived primarily from its offensive dimension. Jomini does not concede superiority to the defense, but he does describe the advantages of an active defense wherein the defender awaits his adversary on a prepared field with resources in hand and able to judge where and when to strike and take the initiative.¹¹ Sun Tzu seems to agree with the superiority of the defense in describing how a weaker force can make itself invincible in the defense while awaiting the attacking force's weak point or moment of vulnerability and then seek victory in the counterattack.¹²

Another factor that aids the defense is the diminishing force of the attack as it progresses. Clausewitz describes the force of an attack which gradually diminishes from the effects of attrition, fatigue and dispersal required to protect rear areas and LOCs. Eventually a point is reached where the remaining strength is just enough to maintain a defense. This, Clausewitz describes as the culmination point of the attack.¹³ Jomini makes a similar point when he points out that an offensive campaign may become defensive before it ends.¹⁴

The advantage of the defense at both tactical and

operational levels lies in the opportunity to launch surprise, concentric or flanking attacks from a favorable terrain position against an enemy force that has been attrited, dispersed, and fatigued (physically or logistically) from the exertions of its offensive. Clausewitz describes the defender's advantage in the opportunity to make flanking attacks as well as the frequent opportunity to attack a portion of the enemy force with the bulk of one's own.¹⁵ Jomini points out the moral effect of the counterattack against an enemy who has been attrited and disorganized by the defense.¹⁶ Saxe discusses the use of redoubts, organized for all-around defense, to disrupt an enemy attack, setting up a successful counterattack.¹⁷

Operational reserves, as defined in the introduction, are the forces which will be used to conduct the operational counterattack. Clausewitz provides some theoretical insight into the dilemma of whether or not one can allow an enemy's operational penetration to continue in order to marshal and deploy one's reserves in a decisive counterstroke. Forces operating against the enemy's flank and rear are not available to his front and are of no value in isolation, according to Clausewitz.¹⁸ He also describes the conflicting interests in defense of a theater: that of dispersing one's forces to retain ground versus concentrating them for a decisive counterattack.¹⁹ Perhaps the most telling point is Clausewitz' caution that uncommitted strategic reserves have no value once the decisive stage of the battle is reached.²⁰ Thus, the creation and employment of operational reserves must be balanced against the

requirements of defending other sectors of the theater and maintaining a coherent mobile defensive force in contact with the enemy penetrating formations. Finally, the counterstroke must be launched before the decisive phase of the battle has passed and the enemy has attained his objective.

In considering theoretical principles which can serve as guidance for employing the operational reserve, the one principle that stands out above all others is the law of concentration. Clausewitz describes keeping one's forces concentrated as the highest and simplest law of strategy.²¹ Jomini's fundamental principle of war is to maneuver so as to engage fractions of a hostile army with the bulk of one's own.²² A basic tenet of Sun Tzu is to engage a fraction of the enemy's strength with the bulk of your own.²³ A more contemporary military theorist, Liddell Hart, states that all of the principles of war can be condensed into the concept of concentrating strength against weakness.²⁴

The law of concentration applies equally to tactics and operational art. The difference lies in the selection of the decisive point against which to concentrate. In operational art, this point must be directly related to the strategic goal of the war or theater. In strategic planning, Clausewitz emphasizes the importance of identifying a center of gravity in the opposing belligerent. This, he describes as the "hub of all power and movement, on which everything depends." This is the point against which to concentrate maximum force.²⁵

The disadvantage of the operational counterattack against an enemy penetration is that the target is limited to the enemy

force within the developing penetration. If this is not the center of gravity of the enemy's theater war effort, then it may be more appropriate to employ the operational reserve elsewhere. However, it is still appropriate to attack the enemy penetrating force if one's own center of gravity is seriously threatened. If one's strategic goal is theater defense, then an enemy force conducting an operational penetration is an appropriate operational objective. Clausewitz states that in defense of a theater, the center of gravity is where the greatest concentration of enemy troops is found.**

The essence of operational art is found in assessing the contribution of one's tactical activities and engagements towards the strategic goal of the theater. Ideally, the operational and strategic results attained will be more than the simple sum of the tactical parts. One way to accomplish this is to concentrate one's force against one or two critical and vulnerable points. Examples of this are MacArthur's Inchon landing in Korea and the German panzer breakthrough at Sedan in the 1940 Battle of France. In the operational defense, a critical point may be the base of penetration, where the entire enemy force can be cut off. A second method of attaining decisive operational results is to employ one's forces so that tactical successes become easy and multiply quickly. In the operational defense, this could be done by concentrating one's operational reserves to attack portions of the enemy penetrating forces successively in the flank and rear.

The essence of the operational defense is the employment of one's operational reserves towards attainment of the strategic

goal through the cumulative effect of the resulting tactical engagements. A developing enemy operational penetration offers excellent opportunities for exploiting the advantages of the defense which lie in its offensive dimension. As a framework for analyzing historical case studies on the employment of operational reserves, we must analyze the tactical and strategic considerations in each case. We must then address operational considerations and analyze how well operational reserves were employed to exploit the advantages of the defense in translating tactical engagements into attainment of the theater strategic goal.

SECTION III - HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

This section will analyze and compare the employment of operational reserves in two campaigns which involved reaction to a developing enemy operational penetration. This problem confronted the German Army between the lower Donets and Dnieper rivers from January-March of 1943 and the Allied Armies in the Ardennes area of Belgium during December and January of 1944. The two campaigns will be described briefly. A comparison and analysis of how operational reserves were created and employed follows.

On 19 November 1943, the Soviet Red Army began a huge offensive that overran two Rumanian Armies and encircled the German Sixth Army in Stalingrad. During the rest of November and December, the Russians reinforced the ring around Stalingrad and defeated German relief efforts. In January 1943, leaving one front of seven armies to besiege Stalingrad, the Russians continued their offensive to the west. By the end of January, the Russian offensive had destroyed the Hungarian Second Army and defeated and driven back the German Second Army, opening a 200 mile gap in the German lines between Voronezh and the bend of the Don River. In early February, the Russians poured across the Donets River, threatening to cut off Manstein's Army Group South from crossings on the Dnieper River and destroy it against the Sea of Azov. Manstein allowed Russian tank columns to continue their penetration, allocating only minimal forces to slow their advance. While the penetration developed, Manstein marshaled

strong panzer forces to the north and south of the Russian columns and then employed them in concentrated concentric attacks against the flanks and rear of advancing Soviet Armies. The Russian tank columns were isolated and destroyed piecemeal by attacks from the flanks and rear. Exploiting this success, Manstein retook Kharkov and Belgorod and restored the defensive line along the Donets river. Manstein's success in halting the Soviet offensive, destroying a substantial amount of Russian armor, and restoring the Donets river line set the stage for a German summer offensive in 1943 that could have enabled them to regain the strategic initiative.²⁷

In December 1944, the Allied Armies on the western front were faced with a German operational offensive through the lightly defended Ardennes sector. Eisenhower and Bradley responded initially by plugging gaps in front of the main German effort in the north while conducting a limited offensive with three divisions in the south. As more divisions arrived around the "bulge," the German attack was stopped and the allies gradually eliminated the penetration and restored the original line. The Allies succeeded in stopping the German attack and destroying much German armor, but Allied forces took comparable losses and the Allied offensive to advance to the Rhine was delayed approximately six weeks.²⁸

Being hard pressed by strong Soviet offensives on all fronts created immense difficulties for Manstein in forming operational reserves. Manstein shortened Army Group South's front by

withdrawing his southern wing to the Mius river line. Leaving Army Detachment Hollidt to hold this line as an economy of force measure, Manstein withdrew the First and Fourth Panzer Armies and concentrated them in position to form the southern pincer of his counterattack. In the north, he concentrated the SS Panzer Corps, which had been railed in from Western Europe, as the northern pincer. He left Army Detachment Kempf in an economy of force defense against three armies of the Soviet Voronezh front east of Poltava. While these reserves were deployed and concentrated, the Soviet penetration continued, coming dangerously close to Dnieper River crossings at Dnepropetrovsk and Zaporozhye and actually cutting Army Group South's main rail supply line near Stalino. In mid-February Manstein launched his reserves in a concentrated counterstroke with the results described above.²⁹

The opportunity for creating mobile operational reserves was better for Bradley and Eisenhower. Although Bradley had no army group reserve and Eisenhower had only the refitting XVIII Airborne Corps at SHAEF, there were plenty of uncommitted or lightly committed armored divisions in the subordinate army areas. Uncommitted armored divisions included the 7th, 10th and 5th as well as the armored division and three armor brigades of British XXX Corps. Additionally, the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 6th Armored Divisions were only lightly committed and the 11th Armored Division was available in England.³⁰ Because they were on the strategic offensive, and thus not hard pressed in other

sectors, the Allies were able to withdraw divisions from other sectors of the line much more easily than was Manstein. The Allied infantry divisions were almost completely motorized. This gave them the ability to move and concentrate much more quickly than Manstein's footmobile infantry with horse drawn transport. Eisenhower and Bradley had a much greater potential capability for creating mobile operational reserves than did Manstein. As already noted, the forces created were, for the most part, employed as soon as they became available, plugging gaps in the north and mounting a limited counterattack in the south. Once the German offensive had been contained, a gradual Allied counteroffensive forced the Germans out of the "bulge" and back into the Siegfried line.²¹

It appears that Manstein achieved better results in comparison to the Allies in the Ardennes. Rather than concentrating against one or two decisive points, the essence of Manstein's operational art consisted of disposing and employing his forces so that they were repeatedly concentrated against the flanks and rear of fragments of the Soviet forces. As a result, victorious tactical engagements came easily and multiplied quickly. Although outnumbered approximately seven to one, he succeeded in destroying the bulk of 3+ Soviet armies and reestablished a strong defensive position from which the Germans were able to make a strong bid to recapture the strategic initiative in the summer of 1943.

Why didn't the Allies employ Manstein's "backhand blow"

technique in the Ardennes? Eisenhower's initial reaction was to avoid piecemeal commitment and launch a decisive counterstroke.³² As late as 18 December, two days into the German offensive, Eisenhower was planning a deep attack converging on Bonn and Cologne on the Rhine river.³³ However, these initial reactions gave way to the more cautious operations as described above. A comparison of considerations concerning operational reserve employment provides some insight into this question.

The first consideration is the strategic goal which the operational employment of reserves seeks to attain. Although strategic goals were erratic and unclear under Hitler, the isolation and destruction of Army Group South which was threatened by the Soviet offensive would have had catastrophic strategic consequences for Germany. Manstein himself states his strategic goal as preventing the isolation and destruction of the German southern wing.³⁴ The best way to do this was to defeat and destroy as many of the attacking Soviet forces as possible.³⁵ For the Allied Armies in December 1944 the immediate strategic goal was a broad advance to the Rhine, destroying as many German forces west of the Rhine as possible.³⁶ By coming out of the Siegfried line and throwing all available forces into the Ardennes "Bulge," the Germans presented the Allies with a golden opportunity to accomplish a major strategic goal. Eisenhower recognized this and states that his objective in the Ardennes counteroffensive was the destruction of German forces in the "bulge."³⁷ Thus, the operational objective for both Manstein and

the Allies was the destruction of the attacking enemy forces.

In deciding whether or not to allow an enemy penetration to continue from the operational standpoint, the element of strategic risk must be considered. In Manstein's case, the Dnieper river crossings and the Sea of Azov coast were both approximately 100 miles from the Soviet penetrations on the Donets river. Seizure of these Soviet objectives would have isolated the two armies and two army detachments of Army Group South and could have led to their destruction with catastrophic strategic consequences for the Germans. The Soviet offensive reached to within 20 miles of major crossings on the Dnieper and cut Manstein's railroad supply line approximately 70 miles north of the Sea of Azov.³⁰ In the case of the German Ardennes offensive, the objective of Antwerp was about 125 miles from the start point. Seizure of Antwerp by the Germans would have split American and British forces, isolating the British and disrupting supply for both the Americans and British. The Meuse river lay approximately 50 miles from the German start point. At Liege, on the Meuse and directly in the path of the German offensive, the Allies had established a huge supply dump which could have sustained the German advance if captured.³¹ The risks involved in allowing the enemy penetration to continue were substantial for both Manstein and the Allies.

The first tactical consideration to address is terrain. In Manstein's area of operations, rolling hills and open spaces offered good trafficability to large armor formations while the

ground was frozen. With no defensible terrain on their flanks, Russian tank columns were extremely vulnerable to concentrated panzer attacks. The situation in the Ardennes was much different. The difficult terrain which slowed the German offensive and allowed relatively small elements to delay much larger forces also hindered Allied counterattacks. To delay committing forces in order to build operational reserves may have allowed the Germans to shore up and fortify their flanks while continuing the drive on Antwerp. The Ardennes terrain did not favor a swift, decisive, backhand blow.

Another important consideration is the condition of the attacking enemy force. Eisenhower and Bradley were faced with relatively fresh, rehabilitated enemy divisions initially organized in depth with reserves at army and army group level.⁴⁰ In Manstein's case, the Russian forces that drove across the Donets river in January 1943 had been attacking since November with only a short pause. They were already tired, attrited and operating on extended supply lines. Additionally, there were little or no front operational reserves left and no strategic reserve at STAVKA.⁴¹ Thus Manstein had a much more inviting target for an operational counteroffensive.

Another important tactical consideration is the relative tactical effectiveness of opposing units. In the case of the German units of Army Group South, Manstein had a decided advantage over his Russian adversaries. Early fighting along the Don and Chir rivers had demonstrated German tactical superiority

in mobile engagements. Russian commanders of lower level units showed a lack of initiative and poor judgment in reacting to unforeseen situations.⁴² At a higher tactical level, the Russians had shown poor coordination in the timing of their tank corps attacks and poor cooperation with infantry divisions.⁴³ Bradley and Eisenhower did not have this advantage of tactical superiority. Although experienced American units were more than a match for the green German Volksgrenadier divisions, the German panzer formations and parachute divisions were formidable tactical opponents.

One of the most important considerations at the operational level is the opportunity for deception. In the winter of 1943, the Soviet command was convinced that the German Army Group South was a beaten force, incapable of launching the type of blow that Manstein was preparing.⁴⁴ This enabled Manstein to gain almost complete surprise for his operational counterstroke. On the other hand, the German force attacking in the Ardennes, in December 1944, was under no illusions as to the strength and mobility of Allied forces north and south of the Ardennes. Thus, the counterstroke was expected and could be prepared for in advance. The only surprise the Allies could spring was in the speed of their reaction, which was at odds with taking the time to concentrate a decisive force.

We must also consider the differing command styles of Eisenhower and Manstein. Eisenhower operated as the head of a heavily layered coalition command structure. His orders and

directives usually consisted of broad guidance and setting priorities while allowing subordinate commanders a great deal of latitude in execution. His decisions were frequently questioned and drew protests from both American and British commanders. Although Eisenhower wanted Patton to concentrate six divisions in the southern attack on the bulge, even if it meant a delay, his orders were sufficiently general to allow Patton to attack with only three divisions and feed the rest in piecemeal.⁴⁵

Eisenhower also had an extremely difficult time prodding Montgomery into a vigorous attack in the north. In contrast, Manstein was in full command of Army Group South in every sense of the word. He had a somewhat different coalition problem than did Eisenhower as most of his Italian, Hungarian, and Rumanian divisions had ceased to exist by the time the Russians crossed the Donets river. At any rate, Eisenhower usually hesitated to take risks and make controversial decisions. Manstein did not.

Theoretically, the best response to an enemy operational penetration is to concentrate one's reserves for a decisive counterstroke into the flank and rear of penetrating enemy forces which may be disrupted, dispersed, and overextended. In reality, many factors may mitigate this theoretically ideal employment of operational reserves. These include ability and willingness to take risks, terrain, relative tactical ability, condition and disposition of friendly and enemy forces, the style of the commander and nature of the command structure. All of these factors affected Manstein's and Eisenhower's different responses

to an enemy operational penetration. Perhaps the biggest difference between Eisenhower's and Manstein's situations was the style and structure of their commands.

SECTION IV - THE DOCTRINAL DEFENSE

Current U.S. Army defensive doctrine in FM 100-5, Operations, is well grounded in classical theory and the lessons of military history applied to modern conditions. AirLand Battle doctrine recognizes the defensive as the potentially stronger, though less decisive, form of war and the importance of its offensive dimension. A successful defense must contain reactive and offensive elements and an effective defense is never purely passive. The essence of the defensive advantage lies in the ability to launch surprise offensive blows from unexpected directions against an attacking enemy that has been attrited, disrupted, and disorganized by static and mobile elements of the defense.⁴⁶

AirLand Battle doctrine also recognizes the importance of identifying the enemy's center of gravity in the operational defense. The center of gravity may include critical fighting units, command or support facilities, politically significant areas, or allied units.⁴⁷ It should be noted that by virtue of being on the defensive, opportunities to strike the enemy's center of gravity may be limited until conditions permit going over to the offensive on the strategic and operational levels. As discussed above, this is especially true when reacting to an enemy operational penetration where the target is limited to those enemy forces in the penetration area. It should also be noted, however, that modern airpower and long range indirect fire and target acquisition systems expand opportunities for striking the enemy's center of gravity, even from an operational or

strategic defensive posture.

FM 100-5 also discusses the importance of accurately sensing the enemy's culminating point or that time when he has exhausted his offensive potential. One objective of the defensive campaign is to hasten the attackers arrival at that point, at which time the defender can switch over to the attack himself.⁴⁸

FM 100-5 notes the importance of holding operational reserves in depth in order to exploit tactical success and to seize the operational initiative.⁴⁹ Here we should note Clausewitz's caution on the pointlessness of retaining strategic or operational reserves beyond the decisive point of the battle. Forming operational reserves in advance of the battle usually involves a choice between allowing one's subordinate units to retain strong tactical reserves or consolidating available forces into an operational reserve. Allowing strong reserves to be retained by subordinate units may produce piecemeal, indecisive commitment while higher level reserves may not arrive at the decisive point in time. As discussed in the the historical section of this paper, it is possible to create operational reserves after the battle is under way by using uncommitted or lightly committed formations, by economizing in less critical areas or by withdrawing forces to shorten defensive sectors.

An important point in FM 100-5 is the importance of planning to deal with the enemy's operational reserves.⁵⁰ This is especially true of Warsaw Pact forces advancing in echeloned formations. In this situation, attacking an enemy penetrating force in the flank and rear may do nothing more than expose one's

own flank and rear to the following enemy echelon. A possible doctrinal solution to this problem lies in the AirLand Battle concept of deep operations. In the situation described, the doctrinal solution would be a deep operations plan to delay and disrupt enemy following echelons thereby isolating the leading echelon and exposing it to attacks against its flanks and rear.

FM 100-5 further describes how strategic direction may constrict operational options in the defense by mandating forward defense and retention of certain locations.²¹ These restrictions are present in the NATO defense of Western Europe and may limit an operational commander's flexibility to allow an enemy penetration to develop while awaiting the best moment of enemy vulnerability to a concentrated counterstroke.

Another NATO restricting factor is the coalition command structure. As noted in the historical section of this paper, Eisenhower's ability to take quick decisive action was somewhat restricted by the heavily layered coalition structure of his command. The NATO command, consisting of air, ground, and naval forces of fifteen nations, will surely pose similar restrictions on the operational commander's ability to make controversial decisions and take quick, decisive action.

All things considered, AirLand Battle defensive doctrine as described in FM 100-5 represents a sound application of classical theory and the lessons of military history to modern conditions. The fundamental concepts and advantages of the operational defense are well described, together with realistic conditions and restrictions that may be operative in a given situation.

SECTION V - CONCLUSION

The optimum employment of operational reserves against a developing enemy operational penetration involves allowing the penetration to develop while marshaling and concentrating one's reserves for a decisive counterstroke against the flanks and rear of successive portions of the enemy force. This response maximizes the inherent advantages of the defense in launching surprise, concentric attacks from unexpected directions against an enemy force that has been attrited, disrupted, and dispersed through the exertions of its attack and the toll taken by defenders. It is necessary to maintain a mobile delaying force in contact with the enemy to slow and limit his penetration, monitor his force locations and progress, and divert his attention from the main effort. This is what Clausewitz meant in stating that forces attacking the enemy flank and rear are not available to his front and have no value in isolation. It is also necessary to conduct deep operations to delay and disrupt following formations of an enemy force advancing in echelons.

The dominant characteristic and thread of continuity in classical theory concerning the defense is its offensive dimension. The attacking force weakens as the attack progresses and becomes vulnerable to attacks from the flank and rear. In countering an enemy operational penetration, the operational objective will normally be the penetrating enemy forces. Theoretically, the best course of action is to concentrate one's reserves so as to attack fractions of the weakened enemy force

successively from the flanks and rear.

Historical analysis of the Kharkov and Ardennes campaigns supports the theoretical conclusion. In employing the theoretically correct response, Manstein achieved superior operational results.

Historical analysis also shows, however, that many factors can be present in any given situation to restrict an operational commander's ability to employ his operational reserves in the manner described above. Strategic considerations include the structure and nature of the command, strategic goals and restrictions and the degree of acceptable risk in allowing an operational penetration to continue. Tactical considerations include terrain, relative effectiveness of tactical units and condition and disposition of friendly and enemy forces. Operational considerations include the opportunity for operational deception and the leadership and command style of the operational commander.

AirLand Battle defensive doctrine as described in FM 100-5 is well grounded in sound classical theory and the lessons of history applied to modern conditions. The concepts of doctrinal defense in FM 100-5 are well in line with the theoretical and historical conclusions described above, to include the limitations that strategic objectives and coalition command structure may place on the operational commander. FM 100-5 should note, however, that in many situations it may not be appropriate to maintain a standing operational reserve. Such a

reserve may dangerously weaken ongoing operations and may not be in position for timely employment. When needed, operational reserves can usually be created by economizing in less threatened or less critical sectors, withdrawing to shorten defensive sectors, or transferring forces from another theater.

ENDNOTES

1. U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, FM 100-5 (Final Draft), Operations, p. 2-2.
2. Ibid, p. 2-3.
3. Ibid, p. 2-2.
4. Baron de Jomini, The Art of War (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, originally published 1862), pp. 61-63, 162.
5. Carl von Clausewitz, On War, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), pp. 128-130, 140-143, 177.
6. Ibid. p. 357.
7. Ibid. pp. 370, 524, 600.
8. Jomini, pp. 63, 66-67.
9. Sun Tzu, The Art of War, trans. S. B. Griffith (London: Oxford, 1882), p. 91.
10. Clausewitz, pp. 360, 372.
11. Jomini, pp. 66-67.
12. Sun Tzu, p. 85.
13. Clausewitz, p. 528.
14. Jomini, p. 66.
15. Clausewitz, pp. 364, 460, 466.
16. Jomini, p. 167.
17. Maurice de Saxe, Reveries on the Art of War, ed. and trans. Brig. General Thomas R. Phillips (Harrisburg, Pa: Military Service Publishing Company, 1953), pp. 110-114.
18. Clausewitz, p. 460.
19. Ibid. p. 486.
20. Ibid. p. 211.
21. Ibid. p. 204.
22. Jomini, p. 63.

23. Sun Tzu, p. 98
24. B. H. Liddell Hart, Strategy (London: Faber and Faber, Ltd., 1954), p. 334.
25. Clausewitz, pp. 595-596.
26. Ibid. p. 486.
27. Description of Kharkov campaign in this paragraph compiled from the following: David M. Glantz, From the Don to the Dnepr: A Study of Soviet Operations, December 1942-August 1943, unpublished manuscript, pp. 101-170; U.S. Military Academy, The West Point Atlas of American Wars: Volume II 1900-1953 (New York: Praeger, 1972) pp. 34-36; James L. Stokesbury, A Short History of WW II (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1980), pp. 239-244; Erich von Manstein, Lost Victories (Chicago: H. Regnery, 1958), pp. 367-442.
28. Russell F. Weigley, Eisenhower's Lieutenants: The Campaign of France and Germany 1944-1945 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981), pp. 445-574.
29. Glantz, pp. 143-163; Manstein, pp. 402-437.
30. Weigley, pp. 458, 494, 502, 504, 510; George S. Patton, Jr., War as I Knew It (Bantam, 1980), pp. 181, 187.
31. Weigley, pp. 445-574.
32. Dwight D. Eisenhower, Crusade in Europe (New York: De Capo Press, 1948), p. 345.
33. Weigley, p. 497.
34. Manstein, p. 373.
35. Ibid.
36. Walter Bedell Smith, Eisenhower's Six Great Decisions (New York: Longman's, Green and Company, 1956), p. 88.
37. Weigley, p. 497.
38. Paul Carrell, Scorched Earth: The Russian-German War, 1943-1944 (New York: Ballantine, 1966), pp. 202-205.
39. Weigley, p. 473.
40. Hugh M. Cole, The Ardennes: Battle of the Bulge (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1965), p. 71.
41. Glantz, p. 105.

42. F. W. von Mellenthin, Panzer Battles: A Study of the Employment of Armor in the Second World War (New York: Ballantine, 1956), p. 223.

43. Ibid. p. 221.

44. Glantz, pp. 104, 168.

45. Weigley, pp. 500-501.

46. FM 100-5, pp. 8-1--8-2.

47. Ibid. p. 9-2.

48. Ibid. p. 9-3.

49. Ibid. p. 8-10.

50. Ibid. pp. 9-4, 9-6.

51. Ibid. p. 9-2.

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